

**News Release**  
**U.S. Department of Justice**  
*United States Attorney*  
*District of Rhode Island*

**October 2, 2007**



## **Five-year prison sentence for gun offense**

A federal judge has sentenced **Robert B. Tantao**, 24, of Lynch Street, Providence, to five years in prison for being a felon in possession of a firearm. In March, state troopers seized a .380 caliber handgun from Tantao after he got out of a car on Congress Avenue in Providence.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith imposed on September 28 in U.S. District Court, Providence.

In May, Tantao pleaded guilty to the firearms charge. At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Zechariah Chafee said the government could prove that, on March 20, state troopers on patrol pulled up behind a car that had just pulled into a driveway on Congress Street after the troopers observed a traffic violation. Tantao was in the rear passenger seat, and, after he could not produce identification, troopers asked him to step out of the car. When Tantao told the trooper he had a gun, the trooper frisked him and seized a loaded .380 caliber handgun from one of Tantao's pants pockets.

Tantao has prior felony convictions for assault and firearms violations.

The Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives assisted in the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Chafee prosecuted it as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a

Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, ATF, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, gun offenders in Rhode Island have been sentenced to a total of more than 800 years in federal prison.

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